

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #59

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: A survey of the Bering River District is being flown today. An announcement for a Thursday or Friday fishery may occur later today or by noon tomorrow if escapement indices from this survey support another fishing period this week. Preliminary harvest from the 24-hour period that closed Tuesday, August 28 was 5,600 coho salmon with 37 deliveries reported. For the week ending August 18, the Bering River District survey count was 10,090 sockeye and 2,280 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 2,271 sockeye and 2,533 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions for Bering River District systems were good.

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: A survey of the Copper River District is being flown today. An announcement for a Thursday or Friday fishery may occur later today or by noon tomorrow if escapement indices from this survey support another fishing period this week. Preliminary harvest from the 24-hour period that closed Tuesday, August 28 was 25,000 coho salmon with 247 deliveries reported. The coho salmon sex ratio from the Copper River District from the period that closed Tuesday, August 28 was 48% female, which matches the long-term historical average for this date. For the week ending August 18, the Copper River Delta survey count was 60,915 sockeye and 14,205 coho salmon versus minimum anticipated goals of 26,465 sockeye and 5,846 coho salmon. During this survey, observational conditions on the Copper River District were good.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: Preliminary harvest reports and escapement indices for the Eshamy District do not support another fishing period this week. Another fishing period is anticipated for next week. There was no harvest reported from the period that closed Monday, August 27.

SEINE FISHERIES: Aerial surveys of the Eastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern, Eshamy and Southwestern districts are scheduled for this week.

PWSAC has not reported a significant increase in hatchery escapement and has provided area recommendations for fishing in hatchery subdistricts.

An estimated 226,000 pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound from Sunday, August 26 through Tuesday, August 28.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH SHA, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. Pink salmon harvest estimates from the previous three periods are as follows: 58,500 Sunday, August 26; 15,900 Monday, August 27; and 9,600 Tuesday, August 28, with a total of 48 deliveries reported.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial fishing for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. Waters of the Eastern District, east of 145° 57.12' W. long., including waters of Simpson Bay and Nelson Bay, will be closed to commercial fishing during these periods. Harvest estimates from the previous three periods are confidential.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial fishing for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. There was no reported harvest from the previous three periods.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, excluding the CCH SHA, CCH THA, and excluding all waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict north and east of a line with a northwest terminus of 61° 00.97' N. lat., 147°

35.50' W. long., and a southeast terminus of 60° 59.12' N. lat., 147° 32.35' W. long., will open to commercial fishing for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. Harvest estimates from Sunday, August 26 are confidential. An estimated 2,800 pink salmon were harvested Monday, August 27. There was no reported harvest from Tuesday, August 28.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial fishing for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. There was no reported harvest from the previous three periods.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. There was no reported harvest from the previous three periods.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, excluding waters of the AFK THA and AFK SHA, will open to commercial fishing for 12-hour fishing periods beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 30 and Friday, August 31. Pink salmon harvest estimates from the previous three periods are as follows: 76,500 Sunday, August 26, 15,500 Monday, August 27, and 10,400 Tuesday, August 28, with a total of 44 deliveries reported.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a “not sold/personal use” field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Friday, August 31. Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.